

WASHINGTON, DC – Yesterday, Representative Earl Blumenauer (OR-3) offered two amendments to the Military Construction and Veterans Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2013 (MILCON). The bill appropriates funding for domestic and global military construction and also for veteran-related programs and facilities.

A bipartisan amendment offered by the Blumenauer and Representative McMorris Rodgers, co-chairs of the Congressional Neuroscience Caucus, would ensure that the Veterans Administration continues to have the resources it needs to find innovative new medicines and enhanced diagnostics for soldiers and veterans suffering from traumatic brain injuries and post-traumatic stress disorder. It requires that no fewer than \$35 million of the Medical and Prosthetic Research Account go toward post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury research and treatment in order to expedite a cure for hundreds of thousands of active duty personnel and veterans suffering the effects of brain- and psychological-trauma incurred during service.

“We still have a very long ways to go if we are to fully understand how the brain’s 100 billion nerve cells grow, interact and are altered by our environment,” said Blumenauer. “What better first step could there be toward reaching this goal, a few short days after Memorial Day, than ensuring funding for effective treatments and therapies for post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury, which plague our military personnel who dutifully serve their country?”

Representative Blumenauer, along with Representative Polis, also introduced an amendment to align the House bill with the Senate mark for the Energy Conservation and Investment Program by providing an additional \$10 million, to \$160 million, for planning and design of energy efficient buildings.

“The Department of Defense uses over 300,000 barrels of oil per day and 3.9 billion kilowatt hours of electricity per year. That’s as much energy as my home state of Oregon,” continued Blumenauer. “I believe that the Pentagon and Congress have an obligation to taxpayers, who foot the Pentagon’s bill, to not only decrease the military’s overall level of energy consumption through efficiency efforts, but to move towards greater energy independence from Petro-Dictators.”

Both amendments were adopted without any objection.

Overall, MILCON provides \$71.7 billion in discretionary spending for FY 2013, at last year's level and \$700 million below the Administration's request. It also continues advance appropriations for VA health care by including \$54 billion for FY 2014.